



# Yuletide Tips For Holiday Safety 2012



This holiday season ***“Don’t Let The Grinch Take An Inch”***. The Durham Police Department Crime Prevention Unit offers simple safety strategies that could lessen, or even eliminate, the opportunity for a crime to occur. Whether in town or traveling, in general be aware of surroundings at all times, be alert to suspicious people and vehicles, and avoid dangerous situations.

## If You Are Travelling...

- Before your trip copy all credit cards, airline tickets, passports and important documents - front and back.
- Jewelry, luggage and all valuables should be photographed prior to trip.
- Inform your Neighborhood Watch block captain and/or a reliable neighbor of your travel schedule.
- Remember to stop delivery of your newspaper and mail.

## Home Security

- Utilizing good dead bolt locks can deter a forced entry into a residence. Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave home, even if it’s just for a few minutes.
- Don’t display gifts where they can be seen from the outside. Consider breaking boxes down and transporting to the recycle station instead of setting them at the curb.
- Conduct a holiday inventory. Take photographs or make videos of items and list descriptions and serial numbers. Keep photos/video in a secure place for future reference. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file. Make sure items like TVs, DVDs, DVD players, stereo equipment, cameras, camcorders, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment and power tools are on the list.
- If you are at home and you hear someone breaking into your residence, leave the residence as quickly as possible. If you cannot leave, lock yourself in a room with a phone and call the police.
- When you leave home, use at least two timers for turning on lights within the residence. Also turn on a radio or a television. This will give the appearance that the home is occupied.
- Upon your return, if something looks questionable such as a slit screen, a broken window or an open door, do not go in. Call the police from a neighbor’s house or cell phone.
- **Report any suspicious activity to 9-1-1 immediately. When in doubt, call 9-1-1 !**
- Neighbors watching out for each other can deter criminal activity in a neighborhood. Consider starting a neighborhood tradition by looking in on neighbors and reaching out in the spirit of the season by helping someone less fortunate or lonely.

## Motor Vehicle Safety

- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended. Also, do not leave a spare key inside the vehicle.
- Do not leave valuables such as laptop computers, cellular phones and chargers, cash, loose change, radar detectors, detachable stereo covers, GPS, Palm Pilots, CDs, and sports equipment in view.
- Keep a record of all your serial numbers for stereo equipment, amplifiers, and other personal items.
- If you choose to drink alcohol at a party, DO NOT drink and drive.
- Do not create or send text messages while driving.

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# **Yuletide Tips For Holiday Safety** (con't)

## **When Shopping...**

- Park in well-lit areas. Be sure to lock the car and to close all windows.
- Carry wallets in front pockets and purses close to your body. Consider carrying your wallet inside of a coat or pants pocket to deter purse-snatchers.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or a credit card. Make sure that only one receipt is printed and that only the last four digits of your card are visible on the receipt.
- When returning to your vehicle (or home), have your keys in your hand ready to open the door.
- Do not store packages in plain view in your car.
- If you take packages to the car, but plan to return to the store/mall, drive to a new location. Criminals can be on the lookout for unsuspecting shoppers who simply drop their purchases into the trunk and then return to shopping.
- Most vehicles are equipped with factory car alarms. If you become startled or are approached in a suspicious manner, push your vehicle's panic alarm or the horn button on your key fob.
- When shopping with children, teach them to go to the store clerk, information center or security guard if you get separated.
- It's always best to have a second adult when shopping with small children. They can watch your surroundings when loading children into safety seats.
- Be careful of people who rush you into signing anything – a contract or sales agreement. Read it carefully and consult someone you trust for a second opinion.
- Be cautious of persons claiming to represent companies, consumer organizations, or government agencies that offer to recover lost money from fraudulent telemarketers for a fee.

## **Protect Yourself on the Internet**

- Shop with reputable companies. When ordering from a new company, request a catalog and have it sent to your residence.
- Protect your personal financial information by using a secure browser — one that can encrypt or scramble credit numbers or other personal data. Consider using the company's 800 number or using a check or money order to pay for your purchase. Always print out a copy of your order and confirmation number for your records.
- Think security! Be leery of persons asking for your password or social security information.
- A con artist's website can look just as professional as a legitimate company's. Always know who you are dealing with.

**For more information please call the Durham Police Department Crime Prevention Unit  
(919) 560-4404**

### **Notice Under the Americans with Disabilities Act**

***A person with a disability may receive an auxiliary aid or service to effectively participate in city government activities by contacting the ADA Coordinator, voice 919-560-4197, fax 560-4196, TTY 919-560-1200, or [ADA@durhamnc.gov](mailto:ADA@durhamnc.gov), as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the event or deadline date.***